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INTELLIGENCE ON THE SOVIET BLOC

The adequacy of intelligence on the Soviet bloc varies from firm and accurate in some categories to inadequate and practically nonexistent in others. We have no reliable inside intelligence on thinking in the Kremlin. Our estimates of Soviet long range plans and intentions are speculations drawn from inadequate evidence. At the other extreme, evidence confirming the existence of major surface vessels in the bloc naval forces is firm and accurate. Operational intelligence in support of current military operations in Korea is generally excellent. Other phases of Soviet bloc activities fall into intervening degrees of intelligence coverage.

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SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE

In the field of atomic energy, our estimates of future Soviet stockpiles of fission weapons are reasonably adequate. The margin of error is such that the actual stockpile may be from 1/3 less to twice the estimate. However, gaps exist regarding production of U-235, and more important, their thermonuclear program.

Intelligence on Soviet biological and chemical warfare programs is extremely limited. On the other hand, we have a fairly good picture of Soviet capabilities in contributing scientific fields.

Knowledge of Soviet electronics has improved significantly in the last eighteen months. Intelligence on Soviet electromagnetic warfare capabilities is now very good. While our knowledge of the electronics aspects of Soviet air defense has improved, there are still serious gaps.

Knowledge of current Soviet guided missiles programs is poor, although certain projects based on German developments are fairly well known.

Technical intelligence on conventional military weapons and equipment is reasonably good as far as standardized items are concerned. However, there is little knowledge of important improvements in such fields as underwater and aerial warfare.

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With respect to basic scientific research, present estimates of long-range developments are very weak, but our estimates of the current status are believed to be more nearly adequate.

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ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE

The adequacy of economic intelligence on the Soviet Bloc varies widely from one industry to another and from one country to another. The best intelligence is on the USSR.

Our intelligence is believed best on output of basic industries in the USSR -- the primary metals, fuels and power, transportation, and some machinery and chemical industries. This intelligence is based in part on official Soviet announcements. Although contrary to what is usually regarded as Kremlin practice and not in keeping with Soviet character, such announcements have been shown to be reliable. The validity of official Soviet statistics has been confirmed by several independent studies based on intelligence materials. We believe, therefore, that official releases are not distributed for propaganda purposes. Nevertheless, there may be a margin of error due to faulty statistical practices and to falsification by the lower echelon. Thus our evidence on most major industries is probably within ten per cent of accuracy and, in the case of critical items such as steel, oil and electric power, within five per cent.

For other industries and for agriculture output estimates are built up from fragmentary intelligence. The techniques used include

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[redacted] plant studies based on reports of prisoners of war, defectors, and returned scientists and technicians who were employed in the bloc in the post-war period; and crop-weather correlation analyses to estimate biological yields. Improvement in such estimates will depend in the future

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upon refinement of research techniques and upon improved collection of raw intelligence materials. To date, these techniques have given output estimates for all major agricultural commodities, and for several branches of industry which range from within ten per cent to within twenty-five per cent of accuracy.

There are still a large number of industries about which little is known. These include producers of certain machinery and equipment items and a few of the rare minerals.

By combining all available output statistics, annual growth rates for industry, agriculture, and gross national product are derived. We believe that they are probably within one percentage point of accuracy, that is, an estimated annual growth rate of six per cent for Soviet gross national product is probably no higher than seven per cent and no lower than five per cent.

Information for East Germany is the most complete, for Czechoslovakia and Poland it is fairly good, while that for China is the least adequate.

At present, intelligence is too fragmentary to permit estimates on strategic stockpiles and working inventories in all Bloc countries.

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ARMED FORCES INTELLIGENCE

Military intelligence concerning the Soviet Bloc is considered from two points of view, tactical and strategic.

Tactical

Intelligence on the activities of the Soviet Bloc armed forces varies with the geographical area under consideration. Intelligence needed in support of ground military operations in Korea is generally excellent. Intelligence on the installations and on developments in Manchuria, such as the movement and activities of the Chinese Communist forces and North Korean units, is inadequate.

Order of battle and equipment intelligence on the USSR, Communist China and - to a lesser degree - the European Satellites, is partial and inadequate. Intelligence on the Communist Bloc units and equipment in most areas with which the US or nations friendly to the US are in contact is more nearly complete and reliable.

Intelligence concerning the strength of the Soviet Bloc and Satellite ground forces is believed to be of a fairly high order of reliability. Intelligence on the navies of the Soviet Bloc is, however, in general, satisfactory and adequate because of the greater accessibility of naval forces to observation.

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Air

Estimates of Soviet air strength are derived from intelligence which is considered of acceptable reliability, but collection coverage is incomplete. Estimates of over-all size and composition of Soviet Air Forces are derived from identification of individual units and from estimated Table of Organization and Equipment strengths authorized for the various types of air regiments. Current estimates of jet fighter and medium bomber strength are considered reasonably valid.

Strategic

Reliable intelligence of the enemy's long-range plans and intentions is practically non-existent. Little improvement in these deficiencies can be expected in the near future despite our efforts.

Warning of Attack

The period of warning which the Western Powers might expect to receive if they were attacked by the Soviet Union vary according to the circumstances of the attack. There is no guarantee that intelligence will be able to give adequate warning of attack prior to actual detection of hostile formations. Opportunity for detection of indications of Soviet or Satellite attack varies from fair in the border areas of Germany and Korea to extremely poor in the Transcaucasus and Southeast Asia.

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In the event of a surprise attack we could not hope to obtain any detailed information of the Soviet military intentions. There would be no detectable redeployment of forces. We could therefore expect at most a few hours warning of air attack and hostile action might well take place in Germany or other territories bordering the Soviet Orbit before any warning at all had been received.

In the event of Soviet strength being fully mobilised for war, we could expect from overt sources at least a month's warning, with confirmation of Soviet hostile intentions building up continuously thereafter.

The period of warning in the event of partial Soviet mobilization for war would vary from the few hours of the surprise attack to something less than the warning to be expected when the attack was delayed until the full strength of the Soviet forces had been mobilized.

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